Design of railway coaches

1279. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that almost all railway coaches have become defective and hard to operate locks inside;

(b) what steps would be taken to make it technically possible to open doors from outside in times of accidents;

(c) whether it also a fact that when fires occur, passengers are trapped inside;

(d) what are the reasons for poor design capability of railway coach factories;

(e) whether outside help would be sought to improve the designs of railway coaches; and

(f) the steps proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) The railway coaches have latches on doors which are locked from inside during the run of the trains, so as to provide safety and security to the travelling passengers, and there is no proposal to make it possible to open from outside, the doors of running trains locked from inside of coaches. These latches are regularly attended to and kept in working order, and can be opened to facilitate evacuation of passengers in case of fire or any other event requiring such evacuation. To further facilitate such evacuation, coaches are also fitted with emergency exit windows and additionally with vestibules in case of reserved coaches.

(d) to (f) Indian Railway coaches are well designed, and have been continuously upgraded to improve passenger safety and comfort, by taking note of technological developments and international norms, and by transfer of technology, wherever necessary. Thus, Indian Railways have switched over from wooden body coaches to integral steel shell coaches having anti-telescopic features. The design of steel shell coaches has recently been upgraded to improve crashworthiness of coaches, besides induction of tight lock centre buffer couplers to prevent climbing of coaches on top of each other in the event of collisions. Specifications of most of the furnishing materials used in coaches have also been upgraded with regard to fire retardant properties, to provide adequate time for evacuation of passengers in case of fire.

Merger of Waltair Division with South Central Railway

1280. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh have submitted any proposal to merge the Waltair Division of East Coast Railway with South Central Railway, for technical, administrative reasons and also to save the operational cost;

(b) whether his Ministry is extending most of trains upto Bhubaneswar from originating station Visakhapatnam without doing any justification with the Waltair Division; and

(c) the reasons for not introducing more trains from Visakhapatnam to Hyderabad and vice versa route, and a superfast train from Delhi to Visakhapatnam at par with the Tamil Nadu Express, despite the fact that public demand is high for these two routes which are economically viable also alongwith the complete details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) To provide better facilities on Bhubaneswar-Vishakhapatnam section (part of the section is in Andhra Pradesh) some trains have been extended from Vishakhapatnam to Bhubaneswar and also Hirakud Express was extended from Bhubaneswar to Vishakhapatnam.

(c) 2805/2806 Vishakhapatnam-Tenali Janambhoomi Express has been extended upto Secunderabad from 01.07.2007. and its load has been augmented from 15 to 21 coaches from July 2007. Introduction of additional train between Vishakhapatnam and New Delhi is however not feasible at present due to operational and resource constraints.

Opening of the Bangalore-Hassan-Mangalore railway line to passenger trains

1281. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether after considerable delay and cost-overruns, Bangalore-Hassan-Manga; railway line has been converted into broad gauge for the purpose of plying passenger trains,

(b) whether currently only goods trains are plying in this section;

(c) whether there is a lot of resentment among the public against not opening the Bangalore-Hassan-Mangalore railway line to passenger trains;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e) when it is proposed to open the section to the passenger trains completely?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) On Bangalore-Hassan-Mangalore route, passenger train services have been provided long back on Bangalore- Arsikere-Hassan Section and gauge conversion of Hassan -Mangalore has also been completed and commissioned in phases. However, Subramanya Road-Sakleshpur Ghat section has been commissioned for goods traffic only from May, 2006.

(c) and (d) Commissioner of Railway Safety conducted the statutory inspection of Subramanya Road-Sakleshpur section and gave conditional authorization for opening to passenger services even as representations were being received.

(e) It is proposed now to commence passenger services in December, 2007.

Construction of overbridges in Orissa

†1282. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of construction of rail overbridges or flyovers at level crossings in Similia in district Dhenkanal, Chainpal and Boinda in district Anugul and Nirakarpur in Khorda district; and

(b) the up-to-date status of the development, modernisation and upgradation of Shyamacharanpur P.H. Dhenkanal, Taichar Road, Anugul and Boinda railway stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) For work of Road Overbridge (ROB) at Similia, Km. 442/8-10 in lieu of LC No. 39 General Arrangement Drawing (GAD) has been approved. Estimate for Railway portion of work has been sanctioned and tender opened but Detailed Estimate for approaches portion has not yet been sanctioned by State Government.

For ROB at Chainpal at Chainage 490-60 between Budhpark-Telcher on NH 23 (LCN T-79) GAD for Railway portion has been approved and tender also opened, Detailed Estime

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.